

Claims

1. A method of operating a computing device, the method comprising, in response to a request from a user to carry out an operation using the device, determining the time period since the identity of the user was authenticated, and enabling the requested operation in dependence upon the determined time period and the purpose of the requested operation.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the identity of the user is authenticated using a pass phrase.
3. A method according to claim 1 wherein the identity of the user is authenticated using biometric information.
4. A method according to any one of claims 1 to 3 comprising determining the time period since the identity of the user was last authenticated.
5. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the requested operation is enabled if the determined time period is less than or equal to a time period set by the user.
6. A method according to claim 5 wherein the time period set for one type of operation is a multiple of a time period set for another type of operation.
7. A method according to claim 5 wherein the time period for a type of operation is arranged to expire upon completion of the immediately preceding operation of the same type.

8. A method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein categories of operations used to determine the purpose for a requested operation are set by the user.
9. A computing device arranged to operate in accordance with a method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8.
10. A computing device according to claim 9 comprising a mobile phone.
11. Computer software arranged to cause a computing device as claimed in claim 9 or 10 to operate in accordance with a method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 8.